

The Cost of Holiness

Scripture Reading — 2 Timothy 3:10-17

*Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.
2 Timothy 3:12 —*

I pulled into the parking lot of a large Indonesian church to lead in worship. Uniformed men in white gloves directed us to our parking space. How nice, I thought to myself. I had seen parking attendants at North American churches, but none that looked so smartly dressed. Later in the day, when men in similar garb met us at a second congregation, I turned to our Indonesian ministry leader and said, “These aren’t parking attendants, are they?” He chuckled and said, “No, of course not. They are guards.”

Indonesia is not the most dangerous place to confess Christ. But over the past ten years, hundreds of churches in that country have been burned to the ground. For some of us, persecution of the church is a chapter from a history book. But for Christians in Indonesia, and in many other lands, the threat of persecution is a part of daily obedience to Jesus.

While we might be shocked that persecution still exists, Paul wouldn’t be. Paul considered persecution a natural consequence of living for Jesus. In a way, we are called to be “eccentric” for Christ’s sake. Eccentric literally means “out of center.” As Christians, we have left behind the old center of a secular life to find a new center in Christ’s holiness. And we boldly live out that central commitment, regardless of the cost.

That makes me wonder why I’m not feeling more persecution for my faith!

Prayer

Father, bless all who experience great pressure because of their faith in Jesus. Help us all to be your witnesses. Amen.

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